

Books don't remain unread very long at our house. We devour many, skim some, and return a few to the libraries unread. I have a habit of sometimes choosing a book by its cover. That can be a useful path to a new-to-me author, or it can be a total failure. The local library's liberal policy of loans works very well for me. Years ago, only six books could be checked out at a time. But now, I leave the library with my two book bags full. And either Runo or I read most of them. But, I have no feeling of guilt about returning a book to the library simply because I did not like reading it. My reading isn't "assigned" by someone else. I decide what I want to read, and if a book doesn't come up to my personal standards for any reason, I don't force myself to read it.

Many of my reading friends are appalled at my method of reading fiction. I read enough of the beginning of a story to have an idea about it, then I go to the back of the book and read the ending. If it does not have an ending I like, I don't read the rest.

Nonfiction, of course, is a different matter. And that brings me to a description of a new book that I would gladly recommend to my friends, except that it is not written in English. I hope there will be a translation some time in the future, because the readers would be treated to a book that tells the story of a couple's highly ethical life choices and explains the dangerous direction our western societies are headed, and, at the same time, is filled with great stories of life on a mountain farm in Norway.

We met the author of *Bondevett*—roughly, the title means common sense of a farmer—in 1995 after some years' correspondence. We were treated to a couple of days on the farm that is the heart of Erik Stenvik's new book, and although we have never personally met Erik and Nanna since that time, we have remained the kind of friends who understand each other because of our lifestyle and our shared world view.

Erik sent us a copy of his new book recently. We are reading it, but it takes a little longer than our usual race through the pages, because it is, of course, written in Norwegian. Runo can read the language with little trouble, but I need the dictionary sometimes, or often, just ask Runo, since the border dialect of Swedish Runo grew up with has a great many Norwegian words in common use. I have been reading the book aloud, so I can ask for explanation when I find it necessary. I am sure Erik and Nanna would smile at my pronunciation, but it works well to read this way, and *Bondevett* is a book we want to "last." We don't want to rush through it.

So, I wish I could share *Bondevett* with all of you. Perhaps, a translation will someday allow you to have access to this worthwhile book.